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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the implications of presumed language universals and language particulars for second language teaching and learning. It is felt that an awareness of the universal features of language design builds confidence in the student who can concentrate on features which distinguish the target language from the native language. Examples are drawn from English and Japanese, with attention to the student of Japanese as a second language. Island constraints, constraints which prohibit certain movements of material out of designated structures, including complex noun phrases, coordinate structures, and sentential subjects, are regarded by some linguists as formal syntactic universals. Ross's explanation of these constraints (1967; 1974) is reviewed, and two alternate accounts are discussed. Grosu (1972) explains them in terms of a theory of interaction between cognitive strategies and grammar, while Kuno's account (1976) gives a semantically or functionally based account. Another phenomenon amenable to this type of functional explanation concerns the behavior of interrogative embedding predicates. In terms of language particulars, the Japanese pronominal system and its interaction with social parameters is discussed. The first person pronoun usage is specifically considered, to demonstrate the sharp contrast in usage between Japanese and English. (CLK)

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LANGUAGE UNIVERSALS AND LANGUAGE PARTICULARS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING*

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1. Modern syntactic studies within the transformational-generative paradigm have frequently referred to findings made by John R. Ross concerning some constraints on variables in syntax. These constraints, which later came to be generally known as "island" constraints, were meant to account systematically for the ill-formedness of sentences like the following:[1]

(1) *The hat which I believed the claim that Otto was wearing is red.

(2) a. *Who does Phineas know a girl who is jealous of?

b. *Who does Phineas know a girl who is behind?

c. *Who does Phineas know a girl who is working with?

(3) a. *The lute which Henry plays and sings madrigals is warped.

b. *The madrigals which Henry plays the lute and sings sound lousy.

(4) a. The teacher who the reporters expected that the principal would fire is a crusty old battle-ax.

b. *The teacher who that the principal would fire was expected by the reporters is a crusty old battle-ax.

c. The teacher who it was expected by the reporters that the principal would fire is a crusty old battle-ax.

Sentences (1) and (2) violate Ross's Complex NP Constraint. Sentence (3) violates the Coordinate Structure Constraint, while (4b) shows a violation of the Sentential Subject Constraint. These constraints all prohibit certain illegal movements of material out of the designated structures.

Ross's constraints have since been putatively regarded by some

people as formal syntactic universals, and there have been attempts to reformulate the phenomena in question along more general lines, in the belief that an adequate explication of the conditions of their application would ultimate result from such attempts.

Important though they are, however, Ross Constraints, as they are stated, are given in purely syntactic terms, and they fall short of providing a principled explanation for the observed ban on movement transformations which are carried out across essential variables.

For example, although (4b) is an ungrammatical sentence, notice that its transformational congener like (4c), where the sentential subject is extraposed, is emancipated from the pertinent restriction. This is true even though the assumed underlying representations for (4b) and (4c) are identical. Notice also that, as Ross himself has noted, some of his constraints fail to apply to languages such as Japanese. For example, the following sentence shows that the structure which would result in an ungrammatical sentence in English proves to be a natural sentence in Japanese. This is due to the fact that the WH-Q movement which is present in English is absent from Japanese, and doko 'where', the wh-word in question, stays in the position in which it is generated in the deep structure.

(5) (Sore wa) [doko e iku] basu no teiryuujoo desu ka.
It Top where to go bus 's (bus-) stop is question
'It is the (bus-)stop for the bus which goes (to) where?

(6) *Where is it the (bus-)stop for the bus which goes (to) Ø?

The claim of universality is vitiated to the extent that these constraints fail to capture cross-linguistic generalizations.

Although I will not try to review in detail various attempts

that have been made to render these constraints more powerful or less powerful, I would like to point out here two apparently different directions in which recent research has been heading, both of them with a view to explaining the nature of the island constraints. One such attempt is represented by the work of Grosu (1972) entitled The Strategic Content of Island Constraints, which originated as his Ohio State dissertation. This is an exploration into the possibility of accounting for the island phenomena in terms of a theory of an interaction between cognitive strategies and grammar. In particular, Grosu considered three types of perceptual principles (i.e., erroneous closure, interrupted behavior, and perceptual conflict) as being responsible for the inability of elements to move out of the structures under discussion here. Note that, no matter which position one happens to take on the dichotomy between the transformational approach of Ross and the global derivational approach of Lakoff, for example, a mere statement of the constraints at issue cannot and should not be considered an explanation of the phenomena. My research in this domain indicates that there seems to be a correlation between these cognitive functions and language typology, particularly with respect to the degree to which word order is frozen or liberated in a given language. For languages like English, Grosu's treatment appears to meet the initial requirement of explanatory adequacy. However, for languages like Japanese which uses particles or postpositions to signal the case relationship of nominals to predicates, word order is not as rigidly controlled as in English and it seems to me that more work is necessary before we can be certain that Grosu's theory accounts for a whole range of data in Japanese.

The other line of investigation is more semantically or functionally based and is represented, for example, by Kuno's work which I think promises fruitful results. I shall, therefore, briefly sketch

here the nature of this burgeoning inquiry.

Kuno (1976) postulates the thematic constraint on relativization which states that a relative clause must be a statement about its head noun. He points out that, in spite of the rather simplistic appearance of his postulate, this, rather than Ross's Coordinate Structure Constraint, accounts for the ungrammaticality of (3a) given earlier. That is to say, it is not possible to regard the lute in (3a) as representing the theme of the entire sentence, since the sentence is in fact a statement about the lute and the madrigals but not about the lute alone. Kuno goes on to show that sentences like the following are definitely better than (3a) and (3b), if not perfect:

(7) ?The guitar that Mary bought and Jane paid for its carrying case was very expensive.

(8) This is the kind of organ that Mary bought and thereby angered her husband.

(9) Here's the whisky which I went to the store and bought.

(10) This is the old lady that Aunt Hattie wants you to be nice and kiss.

These sentences should be all ungrammatical according to the prediction of Ross's Coordinate Structure Constraint. However, they are not. The Thematic Constraint on Relativization can explain this fact quite naturally.

Consider also the following sentences from Kuno 1976:423:

(11) a. This is the child who there is nobody who is willing to accept.

b. ?This is the child who I know a family which is willing to adopt.

c. *This is the child who John married a girl who dislikes.

Ross's Complex-NP Constraint predicts that all of these should be ungrammatical. However, (11a) is significantly better than (11c), if

not perfectly grammatical to everyone. This observation, I think, follows directly from Kuno's thematic approach to syntax. The behavior of the following sentences which Kuno attributes to McCawley (Kuno 1976: 423) may be similarly accounted for:

(12) a. ?Violence is something that I've never met an Englishman who condones.

b. ?Violence is something that Snéad is the only Englishman who condones.

c. *Violence is something that Snéad is an Englishman who condones.

d. Then you look at what happens in languages that you know and languages that you have a friend who knows. (Charles Ferguson, lecture at University of Chicago, May 1971)

Although a lack of time prevents me from citing more examples, Kuno's thematic constraint applies with equal force to some other islands such as *if*-clauses, etc., thereby pointing to the basically semantic nature of these constraints. Kuno states in this connection (and I quote Kuno 1976:427):

> As long as these constraints are stated purely in syntactic terms, their near language universal nature is unexplained. Once it is realized that their syntactic characterizations derive from deeper semantic constraint on themehood, explanations for their near-universal nature automatically follow. There is now urgent need to reexamine all syntactic constraints proposed thus far that have near language universality to see if they are really syntactic constraints or are instead semantic constraints that have superficial and "almost" consistent syntactic realizations.

2. Another phenomenon which is amenable to this type of functional explanation concerns the behavior of Interrogative Embedding Predicates or IEP. Consider the following sentences:

(13) a. Joe asked Carol when she had come back from Japan.

b. Jimmy knew who he should marry.

c. Lucie forgot whether she had let the cat in.

(14) a. *John believed who was a Lipton-tea lover.

b. *George claimed when he had discovered the rule of negative transportation.

(15) a. *Joe asked Carol that she had come back from Japan.

b. *Bill is trying to find out that his train leaves at noon.

(16) a. John believed that Charlie was a Lipton-tea lover.

b. George claimed that he had discovered the rule of negative transportation.

At this point, the following question arises. Why is it that (13) and (16) are well-formed but that (14) and (15) are ill-formed? My hypothesis is that only predicates that make crucial reference to the existence or transfer of some relevent information can embed so-called indirect questions below them. Suppose we indicate the presence of such information as +info and its absence as -info. Then, in (13b) the situation is +info for Jimmy, the subject of the sentence. In (13b), it is -info for Lucie the subject of the sentence. In (14), neither the verb <u>believe</u> nor the verb <u>claimed</u> has anything to do with either the acquisition, presence, loss, or absence of information. Now, some predicates and predicate phrases are inherently -info, and such IEP's have no choice but to embed interrogatives when they embed at all. They cannot embed a <u>that</u> clause, as (15a) and (15b) testify. (16) shows that non-IEP's are quite comfortable with the embedding of a declarative. As I have shown in Nakada (1976a & 1976b), we have exactly the same situation in Japanese. In other words, I claim that indirect questions are found embedded only in IEP's in any language.

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3. What are some of the implications of these presumed universals for second language teaching and learning? Limiting myself for the

moment to the case of English speakers learning Japanese, the observed universals would mean that when a student can form an embedded question in his own language he can also do so with confidence in his target language, which in this case is Japanese. Notice, however, that this is not a logical necessity insofar as syntax is concerned. The student must be made aware of this. And an awareness of these universal features of language design builds up confidence in the student, who can then concentrate on features which distinguish the target language from his native tongue. In the case of the Thematic Constraint discussed earlier, this would mean that a student can confidently form a relative clause in Japanese as long as he relativizes (that is to say, deletes) the theme of the embedded sentence. Recall that some of Ross Constraints are inoperative in Japanese, and to that extent they constitute language particulars, not universals. The Thematic Constraint, on the other hand, enables the student to see that (17a) below is unacceptable because its underlying thematic sentence (17b) is unacceptable (Kuno 1976:419):

(17) a *(kono mondai o tokenakatta node, boku ga toita) hito
this problem could-not-solve since I solved person

'the person who (lit.) since (he) could not solve this problem, I did'

b. *(Sono hito wa)$_{\text{Theme}}$ kono mondai o tokenakatta node,
the person this problem could-not-solve

boku ga toita.
since I solved

'Speaking of that person, since he could not solve the problem, I did.'

In general, it is often the case that when someone has proposed a putatively univeral rule or constraint to account for a given phe-

nomenon, some evidence emerges later from certain languages to suggest that the proposed rule may not be universal after all. When a case like this presents itself, it is necessary to revise the initial hypothesis in such a manner as to accommodate the new evidence introduced. Of course, the usefulness to language pedagogy of linguistic inquiry is in direct proportion to the degree to which linguistically significant generalizations are captured. Kuno's thematic constraint then is to be preferred over Ross Constraints, not only for linguistic theory per se, but also for possible contributions it makes to language teaching.

I might add at this point that the syntax of donatory verbs in Japanese (such as yaru, kureru, and morau) which usually give trouble to students of Japanese can be handled in terms of Kuno's universal rules of empathy--such as the Ban on Conflicting Empathy Foci, the Surface Structure Empathy Hierarchy, the Speech-Act Participant Empathy Hierarchy, and the Topic Empathy Hierarchy. The ill-formedness of English sentences such as the following:

(18) *Then, Mary$_i$'s husband$_j$ hit his$_j$ wife$_i$.

(19) ??John received back from Mary the package that she had received from him two days before.

can be accounted for by the same empathy rules.

4. Turning now to the domain of language particulars, I shall deal with an aspect of the Japanese pronominal system and its interaction with some social parameters, in an attempt to demonstrate the sharp contrast which exists between Japanese and English in this respect.[2]

Let us begin by imagining a situation in which a Frenchman is trying to learn English. The Frenchman learns, for instance, that the English word for French "je" is "I". He also learns that the French

"vous" and "tu" may both be rendered into English as "you". Speakers of English who are trying to learn French or German, on the other hand, must know how to differentiate between "vous" and "tu" in French or between "Sie" and "du" in German for the English second person pronoun "you".

In languages like English, French, and German, the system of self-designating terms or the first person pronoun may be described as a system of ego-modification. This is illustrated in Diagram 1, where you see EGO, the speaker, referring to himself as I/je/ich whether talking to his wife, his child, his friend, his boss, or even to a stranger.

By contrast, the Japanese use different self-designating terms depending upon the context. As Kurokawa (1972) reports, male speakers use five variants of I, while female speakers use three variants. For example, 100% of the men surveyed use boku, 90% use ore, 80% use watashi, 50% use watakushi, and 10% use atashi. The forms used by women speakers are watakushi (80%), watashi (50%), and atashi (60%). This list is by no means exhaustive since we have, in addition to those terms given above, such forms as chin, maro, ware, uchi, oresama, mi, sessha, washi, jibun, oira, tamae, temee, oidon, shoosei, wate, yo, etc., almost ad infinitum. What is interesting about the system of self-designating terms in Japanese is that in spite of the existence of such a great number of forms, none of them occurs very often in daily conversation, for example. As was pointed out by Kuroda (1965), the rule of pronominalization in Japanese produces an output which is phonetically zero: in other words, deletion is the predominent way in which pronominalization is realized. For example, while English speak-

ers would say:

(20) a. George does his work when he feels like doing it.

to mean: b. George does George's work when George feels like doing George's work.,

Japanese speakers would say:

(21) a. George wa shi-tai toki ni shigoto o suru.

to mean: b. George wa George ga George no shigoto o shi-tai toki ni George no shigoto o suru.

Earlier I have said that the system of first person pronouns in some Indo-European languages is that of ego-modification. Now, in Japanese, we have a system of ego-reification (this term was first used by Takao Suzuki 1968 and 1973). This system is illustrated in Diagram 2. Let me explain this. First, let us take the case of a father, any father. In Japanese, he is used to being called 'papa' or 'o-too-san' by his child, and so refers to himself not as 'watashi' or 'boku' or any of the other equivalents of 'I' in English, but as 'papa'. He says, for example, "Papa is going to the office now" instead of "I am going to the office now" as we say in English. An older brother might say to his younger brother "Give it to older brother" to mean "Give it to me," and so on. In other words, the speaker uses as his first person designatum the term of address which the hearer would normally use in addressing the speaker. This is tantamount to the specification of ego from the hearer's point of view. This kind of ego-reification is manifested not only in the family type situation I have just described, but also in society at large. For example, the teacher calls himself 'sensei' (teacher) because he is used to being called 'sensei' by his students; the policeman calls himself 'o-mawari-san' because that's the

way people would address him. There are even extreme cases in which a guest in an inn would call himself 'o-kyaku-san' (honorable guest) in talking to a maid because she would address him as such.

We have so far seen the interaction of social parameters in relation to the appropriate choice of first-person terms. We shall next examine how such social factors bear upon the selection of second-person terms. As Diagram 3 illustrates, the choice of a second-person term is governed by the same principles that dictate the selection of first-person terms, but the former seems to have a wider range of possibilities to choose from, since the use of family names and first names gives the second-person designator an added dimension. This is also indicated in the diagram. Thus, in addressing a second person, the speaker must decide whether to use:

a. his name or an address term. If the name is chosen, will it be:
b. family name or first name, and will he use it:
c. with respect suffixes such as -sensei, -san, -kun, -chan, etc.
d. if an addressee term is chosen, which of the many possible forms such as anata, sochira, otaku, omae-san, omae, omee, temee, kimi, kisama, etc.

5. Another dimension that controls the choice of first and second person pronouns is the interaction of the axis of POWER and the axis of SOLIDARITY in the sense of Brown and Gilman (1972). Kurokawa (1972:229) and Blocker (1976) have each done some work on this. Further investigation of this area might shed some light on the linguistic change now in progress as it concerns the use of pronouns and honorifics.

Lack of time, however, prevents me from going into it now.

In any case, I hope that the foregoing discussion of terms of address in Japanese in comparison with English personal pronouns has made it clear that, here, we are dealing with language particulars--namely, phenomena of language which are perhaps particular to Japanese, and possibly to Korean, but which are not shared by, say, English. A good understanding of these facts and an equally good exposition of these facts is absolutely essential before students of Japanese can appropriately use the language in actual situations. And the studies which explore such phenomena have, in my opinion, far-reaching importance to second language teaching.

6. In the preface to A Linguistic Guide to Language Learning, Professor Moulton tells the tale of a graduate student in linguistics who came to the Department without any knowledge of French and/or German but who, in spite of it, in due time passed the qualifying examinations in both languages with flying colors. Of this student, Professor Moulton remarks, and I quote (p. xi):

> How did he do it? Part of the answer is that he was unquestionably a skilled and experienced language learner. But equally important--perhaps more important--was the fact that he possessed to a high degree what I have referred to above as "linguistic sophistication." He knew how human languages work. In attacking a new language he knew what things to look for and what things not to carry over from his native English.

It is my contention that, as thoretical linguists and as language teachers, we must continue to seek explanations for these verbal phenomena we call Language so that we may be able to help the students acquire the "linguistic sophistication" of which Professor Moulton spoke above.

FOOTNOTES

[0]I would like to thank Barbara Thornbury for her helf in improving the style of this paper.

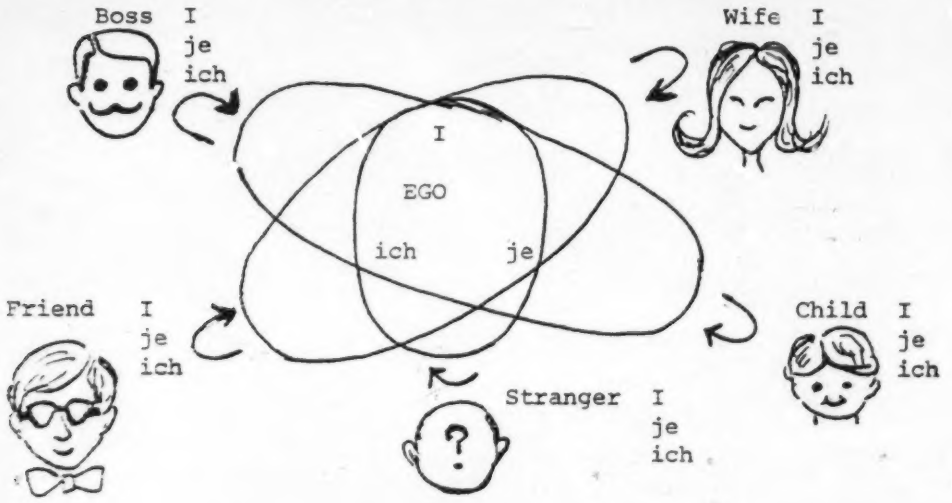
[1]The examples cited are from Ross (1967) and reprinted in Ross (1974). The sentences (4a) and (4c) are well-formed, however. They are given here for the sake of contrast.

[2]This section is based on the findings by Suzuki (1968) and (1973). The diagrams are from Kato and Gramlich (1973).

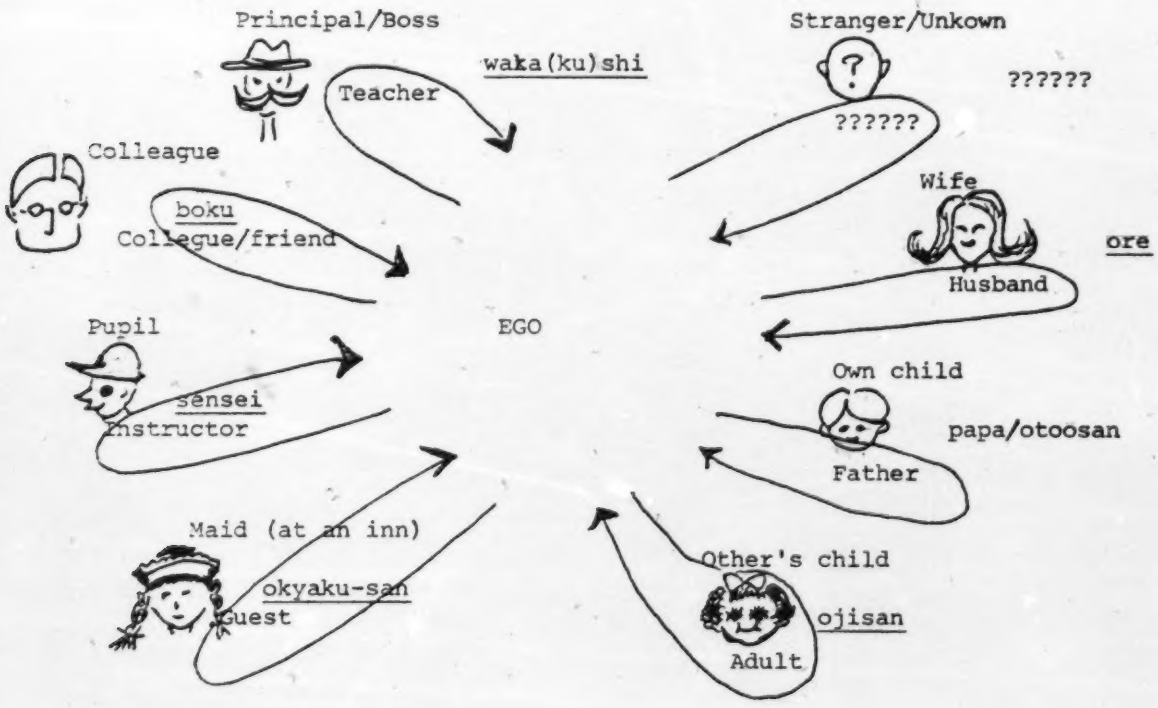
*This paper was presented at the Third Annual Meeting of the New Jersey Linguistic Association which was held at Princeton University on April 30, 1977.

Japanese Terms of Address vs. English Personal Pronouns

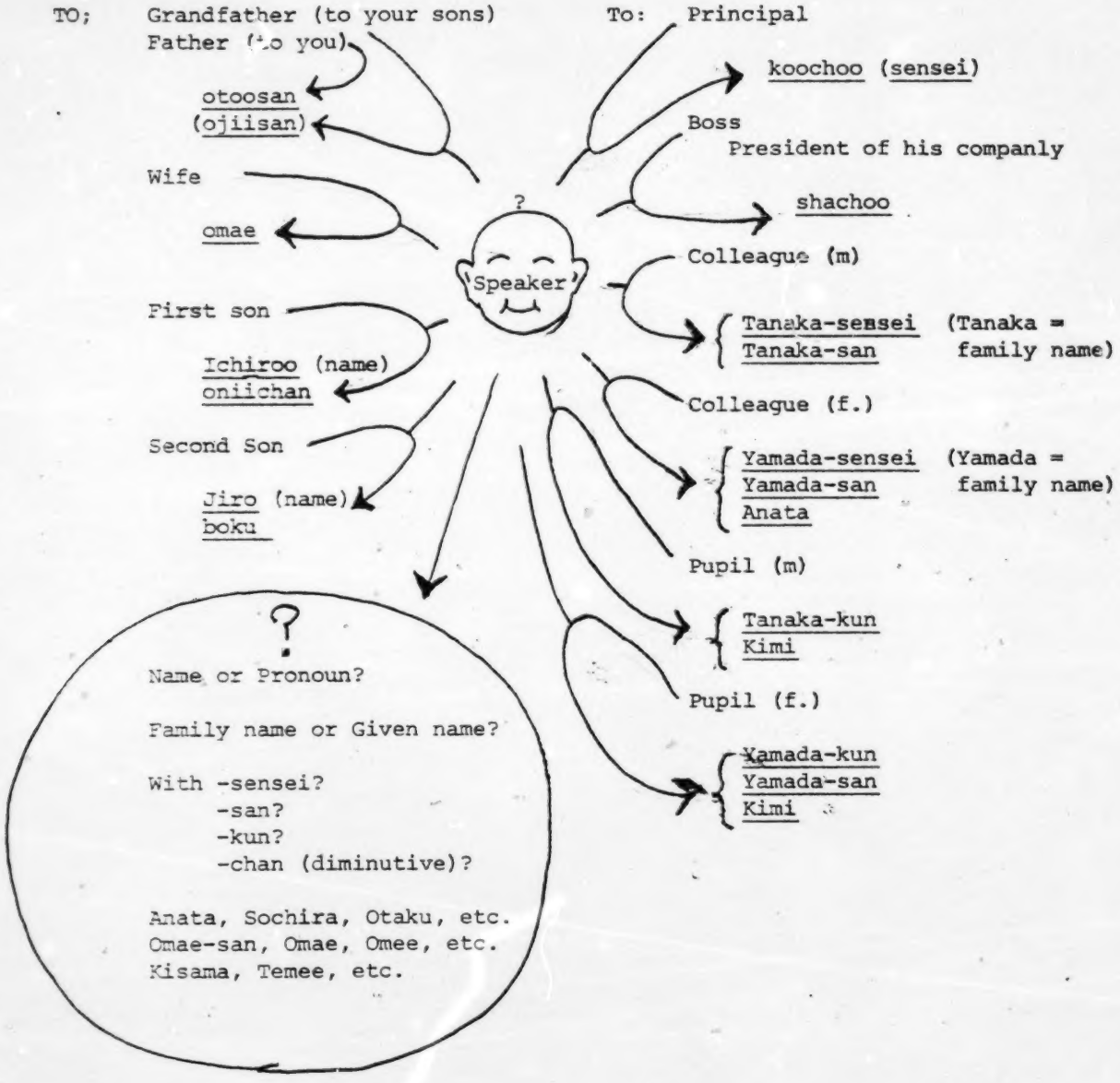
(Diagram 1) English (French, German) First Person Pronoun - Ego-modification



(Diagram 2) Japanese Terms of Address, First Person - Ego-reification



(Diagram 3) Japanese Terms of Address, Second Person = Situation Oriented



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LANGUAGE UNIVERSALS AND LANGUAGE PARTICULARS? IMPLICATIONS FOR SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Princeton University

(1) *The hat which I believed the claim that Otto was wearing is red.

(2) a. *Who does Phineas know a girl who is jealous of?

b. *Who does Phineas know a girl who is behind?

c. *Who does Phineas know a girl who is working with?

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c. The teacher who it was expected by the reporters that the principal would fire is a crusty old battle-ax.

(5) (Sore wa) [doko e iku] basu no teiryuujoo desu ka.
It Top where to go bus 's (bus-)stop is question

'It is the (bus-)stop for the bus which goes (to) Ø?'

(6) *Where is it the (bus-)stop for the bus which goes (to) Ø?

(7) ?The guitar that Mary bought and Jane paid for its carrying case was very expensive.

(8) This is the kind of organ that Mary bought and thereby angered her husband.

(9) Here's the whisky which I went to the store and bought.

(10) This is the old lady that Aunt Hattie wants you to be nice and kiss.

(11) a. This is the child who there is nobody who is willing to accept.

b. ?This is the child who I know a family which is willing to adopt.

c. *This is the child who John married a girl who dislikes.

(12) a. ?Violence is something that I've never met an Englishman who condones.

b. ?Violence is something that Snead is the only Englishman who condones.

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d. Then you look at what happens in languages that you know and languages that you h e a friend who knows. (Charles Ferguson, lecture at University of Chicago, May 1971)

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(17) a. *(kono mondai o tokenakatta node, boku ga toita) hito
this problem could-not-solve since I solved person

'the person who (lit.) since (he) could not solve this problem, I did'

b. *(Sono hito wa) kono mondai o tokenakatta node,
Theme
the person this problem could-not-solve

boku ga toita.
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'Speaking of that person, since he could not solve the problem, I did.'

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